SELF-OFFERING

By Elwyn J. Larson

A NATIONAL GUILD OF CHURCHMEN TRACT

First Printing
1969

Printed in the United States of America
by Commercial Offest Printers, Inc.

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In "The Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion" of the Book of Common Prayer, page 81, we read these words: "And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls, and bodies . . ." They occur in the Prayer of Consecration of the Bread and Wine to become the very Body and Blood of Christ our Lord, at the heart of the Church's central service, the Holy Eucharist, or Mass, as we may call it.

"And here we offer — unto You — our souls and bodies —"

Do we really mean this when we say it? How much do we mean it? Are we willing to offer ourselves to God every morning, and ask Him to help us say and do and think each day what He would have us to do? Are we really Christians — defined as "Christ's Men"?

The Blessed Spirit of our risen Lord, the Holy Ghost, will come more and more into our lives as we invite Him in, and make a way for Him by prayer and study and meditation. We must surrender our entire personality, our body and soul, to Him.

Every baptized person can have the fruits of the Holy Spirit — love, joy, peace, etc. — to the degree in which he is ready and willing to accept them. We can call upon the Holy Spirit at all times, and He will be with us. By keeping the moral and physical laws of the body, we can be more receptive to His power.

We don't have to say, "What can I do?" We find ourselves involved in the problems of people and the world when we offer ourselves to God. He uses us individually, according to the talents He has given us, in strange and different ways, as He has need for us to help Him with His work. We may begin by sending a prayer to Him for anyone we meet who has a problem. Even a "flash" prayer will be most acceptable. We are to be His workers here on earth, and should report to Him anything that we see that isn't as it should be. We must also thank Him at once, because He is already working on the problem, as it was He in the first place Who inspired us to pray. If we are to be used in helping the person or persons, we will then know it, or He will find someone who has the talent to do it. But we have taken the problem to God and laid it at His feet, and that was our responsibility; for always He

blesses with a certain peace of mind those who try to do His will, and we know that we have done what He wanted us to do.

When with Christian love in our hearts we can *see* other people, then we are able to look past the physical into their spiritual beings, and understand them all as children of God.

It sounds very simple — and it is simple — yet we will find it isn't as easy as it sounds. For, as we go on, the forces of evil in the world will try to hinder and discourage us, because the devil does not like to see us growing in grace. Here is where our prayer and study and meditation can help us; and we will find we have added strength from God, plus courage and inspiration from those who have trodden this path before us. Also, even if it seems at times that God has forsaken us, He will never let us down; and we will be growing through our trials and tribulations, and become better channels of His Love.

Sometimes we may be almost completely discouraged, and think: "What's the use? Things don't seem to change very much;" but then is when we have to pray for more patience. It may be that we are

being tempted, as we will be most of the time. We will have our "dry" periods as well as those with a special sense of love and joy.

It does appear that there are many Church-going people, and of course those who do not go to Church, who seem to be so lost. They can hear the "Good News" and sing about it, but do not try to apply it to themselves or share it with others. They don't know the joy they should have by letting the Lord live in them, and through them to everyone about them.

Always we can send up an "SOS" for help, and always God is ready to listen to us whenever we want to talk with Him. And when we get "tuned in", we can hear Him speaking to us. Often short prayers from the heart will be even more effective than longer periods of prayer.

As well as offering Him our talents, we ought to send to Him on the wings of prayer our weaknesses and failures; and we will receive strength and reassurance. Over and over again He is ready to wash away our sins as we seek forgiveness and are truly sorry; because He never withholds His love and forgiveness from us.

In fellowship with one another we will grow in His Kingdom here in this world. We can witness to Him every Sunday in His Church, and thus help strengthen the unity of the Brotherhood of Jesus Christ. Always we have to pray for more faith to trust in Him, and ask Him to aid us in leaving ourselves completely in His hands.

"O Lord, how wonderful are your statutes; and in the keeping of them is great reward." (From several Psalms.)

Self-Offering! So, all of ourselves, souls, bodies are to be re-offered to our dear Lord each and every day. Further, above everything else, they are to be offered to Him in union with His one offering of Himself once for all on Calvary, in His own Real Presence at the Eucharist. There, within the Family of God we meet with Him at His altar, and thence carry out that presence and power into every area of our lives.

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